

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

Research Memorandum
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TO : The Secretary
THROUGH: S/S
FROM : Roger Hilsman

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SUBJECT: World Reaction to the President's Speech on Cuba

In the free world initial foreign reaction to the President's speech has in general been favorable, though the exact tone varies widely from country to country. The communist bloc has been predictably critical but the nuances of the Soviet government's public statement will not be available until the full text is received later this morning.

As additional information is received we will forward brief analyses of developments which warrant your attention.

The Communist Bloc According to an AP bulletin, the Soviet Government has issued a "serious warning" to the United States following President Kennedy's declaration of an arms blockade of Cuba. In a statement broadcast by Moscow radio, the Soviet Government denounced as "hypocrisy" President Kennedy's statement that Cuba had been turned into a Soviet base for offensive missiles and weapons.

We will prepare an analysis of the statement by the Soviet Government after we receive the complete text.

Initial Moscow reaction to President Kennedy's speech came late, after most of the East European bloc states had reported and condemned in varying degree the speech and the imposition of a limited blockade on Cuba by the United States. Soviet newspapers have not yet reported or commented on the U.S. action. This morning Moscow broadcast a factual TASS summary of the

President's speech ending with the statement that "the speech by the U.S. President abounded with crude anti-Soviet attacks."

East European bloc reaction is still incomplete. It includes sharp condemnations of the U.S. action by Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, a relatively restrained report from Poland, and brief critical broadcasts by East Germany and Hungary. FBIS reports that the New China News Agency (NCNA) ran a story on the Kennedy broadcast; the text is not yet available. Other Asian Communist bloc countries have not reacted.

Latin American Reactions. Public and official Latin American reactions to President Kennedy's speech were almost uniformly favorable, with comment showing strong support for US action to counter Soviet aggressive buildup in Cuba.

Latin American governments and news media were generally shocked at revelations regarding the offensive nature of the buildup. The most striking reaction came from the Presidents of Brazil and Mexico (the latter both of whom had resisted action against Cuba and now indicate that, in the changed circumstances, they are willing to support US action to counter the Cuban menace to peace and security in the hemisphere. Nearly every country of the 14 reported so far indicated support for the US position in the OAS and UN. Several Caribbean countries implied or stated willingness to contribute armed forces units to cope with the situation. Without exception the Latin governments commenting are confident of their ability to protect US lives and property against Castro-communist attack.

The Castro regime mobilized its armed forces shortly before President Kennedy's address. Fidel Castro will speak today. Meanwhile, radio com-

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mentaries have denied the offensive nature of the buildup in Cuba and cited the quarantine as an act of war. Cuba today requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider that act.

Western European Comments. Reactions to the President's Cuban-Blockade announcement ranged all the way from censure in the UK (Manchester Guardian, which called the action unjustifiable) to full support by official spokesmen of the West German Government and by Mayor Brandt of Berlin.

Of the Western European countries, West Germany may be expected to give the most unequivocal support to US policy on the Cuban crisis. None of the governments so far heard from in the Western European area indicated opposition to the President's announced course of policy. Canada has already denied permission for Soviet planes en route to Cuba to land on its territory, and Prime Minister Diefenbaker proposed that a fact-finding group of 8 non-aligned nations be permitted to enter Cuba for an on-the-spot inspection of the state of the Soviet military buildup there. Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies commended President Kennedy for his statement and described the US action as "in essence defensive;" he instructed his UK representative to support the US resolution calling for withdrawal of missile bases and offensive weapons from Cuba. The Dutch Foreign Office congratulated the US for making its intentions clear "so that all parties know exactly where they stand," and described President Kennedy's statement as "gratifying." The British Foreign Office said the UK Government was "profoundly shocked" by the Soviet buildup; Prime Minister Macmillan has called his Cabinet into special session (the UK has so far resisted US pressure for an embargo on shipping to Cuba.) In general the British press was not enthusiastic about the US action.

The French and Italian governments have not yet been heard from. In France, press reaction was mixed, with Figaro emphasizing that the US action was essential in order to avoid the appearance of weakness; this newspaper also discounted the interpretation that President Kennedy's speech was motivated by domestic political considerations.

Far East Reactions

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The initial responses to President Kennedy's message have been favorable with the Republics of Korea, China and the Philippines fully supporting our position and the Government of Japan acquiescing in our policy. The Japanese Foreign Ministry's unofficial view is that the US was obliged to take the action it is taking, that the situation is regrettable and that a peaceful solution at the UN is expected. The Japanese press will probably question US action but will not actually oppose it. Leftist organizations are capable of stirring up protests and demonstrations although the general public will probably not reflect much concern. The ROK Government welcomes the US action and reaffirms its readiness to support and cooperate in such efforts anywhere in the world. The GRC has instructed its representatives on the UN Security Council to fully support the US. Philippine President Macapagal, while noting the dangers of a world conflagration, has also assured our ambassador of full support.

Africa

Thus far, official reaction is confined to expressions of regret on the part of Nigeria's Prime Minister that the situation in Cuba is deteriorating, especially at a time when India and China are in open conflict, and the Congo (Leopoldville) Prime Minister's appreciation of the gravity of the situation and recognition that a halt had to be called. No reactions to the President's speech have been received from African public information media.

Middle East and South Asia

No editorials from Middle East and South Asian countries are available at this time, and our ambassadors have not yet reported any substantive comments, from officials.